

28 Oct 0900-1900 JCS meeting

In view of recent intell on low jump in Cuba, request recommendation from CINCLANT on any changes necessary in the planning. Particularly whether US invasion forces should be equipped with the same. CANT replied: considered it prudent that US air & ground forces committed for Cuba have an atomic delivery cap. So JCS authorized him to take nuclear capable delivery systems (e.g. 8' low, Hawk jet) but no nuc weapons themselves without further JCS approval.

Potentially to schedule 4 low-level recon flights for late afternoon, & that aircraft would fly through any fire encountered. (?) (disappeared? no flights)

Drew attention of CINCS to Interch K message, which JCS thought might be an invasion proposal intended to gain time.

Again considered loss of 0-3, no action.

The President's letter, which was published at the time, took up a rambling note from Mr. Khrushchev the night before and construed it to offer withdrawal of the missiles in return for lifting of the naval quarantine of Cuba and a no-invasion pledge.

The President's letter deliberately ignored a more stubborn Khrushchev note that was received on the morning of Oct. 27. That note demanded abandonment of United States missile bases in Turkey as the price for withdrawal of the Soviet weapons in Cuba.

High officials who took part in the critical decisions of Oct. 27 said tonight that they knew of no secret message or ultimatum.

They supported the Attorney General's statement that Major Anderson's death was a major element in bringing this country to the edge of drastic actions such as an air strike on Cuban bases. But they said the warning to Mr. Khrushchev--the "notification"--was by way of deeds, not words.

Soon after Washington learned of Major Anderson's death, a decision was made to call up 14,000 Air Force reservists. Military and communications equipment were rushed south to Florida.

Tonight, officials said that it was decided to let these moves be made more or less openly--"to move the people around in a slightly more visible way," as one put it. The idea was to make it clear that a serious United States move was imminent.

"What got the message through to Khrushchev was action," one official said. "The message was clear that something was going to happen and happen soon."

The Attorney General confirmed in his speech a report that it was Major Anderson who took the first pictures of the Soviet missile bases as they were under construction in Cuba.

That U-2 flight was made Oct. 14. Major Anderson was believed to have been slightly off his charted course when his camera picked up the bases in the San Cristobal area.